Happy Father’s Day Weekend! I so honored I get to share with you today…

ANNOUNCEMENT:

**OPERATION 180: STARTS NEXT SUNDAY AT 3 PM**

**THROUGH AUTHENTIC, SAFE CONNECTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY, MEN WILL RECEIVE SUPPORT ON THEIR JOURNEY TO FREEDOM IN WHATEVER YOU MAY BE FACING.**

**LEARN TO BE THE HUSBANDS, FATHERS, AND MEN OF GOD THAT YOU WERE CREATED TO BE, AS YOU RECEIVE HEALING THROUGH GOD'S WORD AND FORGIVENESS!**

**REGISTER FOR FREE UNDER THIS WEEK’S HIGHLIGHTS ON THE ROCK APP OR GOTOTHEROCK.COM.**

**BIBLE Declaration…**

**Open up to the book of Ephesians today…**

**The Devil’s Grip on Believers**

-I feel a little funny about this teaching…

-It’s not really a typical Father’s Day Weekend teaching…

-Essentially, I feel like my role today is to tell you:

1. Happy Father’s Day

2. That you likely have demons trying to torment you.

**Enjoy Olive Garden!**

-BUT, you can never say anything better than what the Lord tells you to say…

-AND I know the Lord wants today to be life-changing and delivering for many of you.

**PRAY… [God, open people’s ears to hear and eyes to see] [Have them pray]**

* Did you know the devil can have a grip on our lives??
  + We as born-again believers can have spiritual strongholds in our lives keeping us bound to:
    - Alcohol
    - Drugs
    - Lust
    - Laziness
    - Anxiety
    - Depression
    - Complacency
    - Anger
    - Strife
    - Etc.
* Towards the end I’ll share how I went through things a spiritual battle in the beginning of the year like nothing I’ve ever been through…
  + It taught me so much.
* So today we’re going to talk about some spiritual warfare that believers go through…

**Open up to Ephesians chapter 4 and 1 Peter 5…**

**While you’re going there, let me read from Ephesians 1…**

**Ephesians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

* So who’s he writing to?
  + BELIEVERS… Faithful followers of Jesus.

Keep that in mind as we jump to Ephesians 4…

**Ephesians 4:25-32** “Therefore, putting away lying, “*Let* each one *of you* [BELIEVERS] speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. **26**“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, **27**nor give place to the devil. [🡨HAVE EVERYBODY REPEAT THAT] **28**Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. **29**Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. **30**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31**Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. **32**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

* So he’s talking to believers… What does this tell us?
  + Born-again believers by what we SAY and DO can BOTH:
    - Grieve the Holy Spirit of God
    - Give place to the devil
      * In other words:
        + Removing God’s ability to work
        + Making room for the enemy to work
* Today we’re going to specifically talk about making room for the enemy…
  + By the way, father’s need to hear this…
    - Because you can give place to the devil in your life AND your families life…
* It’s the enemy’s goal is to find a residence… A place to wreak havoc… to steal, kill and destroy everything he can…
  + Are you letting him find that place in your life?
  + IF YOU AREN’T ACTIVELY FIGHTING TO KEEP HIM FROM FINDING A PLACE IN YOUR LIFE, THEN HE’S LIKELY FOUND ONE.

**1 Peter 5:8** “**Be sober, be vigilant**; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, **seeking** whom he **may** devour.” [GO OVER VERSE AND EXPLAIN]

* “Be sober, be vigilant”
  + BE CLEAR-HEADED about this…
  + Keep careful watch…

Turn to Ephesians 6:12… We’ll read this ALOUD TOGETHER.

**Ephesians 6:12** “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places.”*

*[Read it back to them…]*

**Ephesians 6:12** “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places.”*

-NOT WE SHOULD NOT, we DO NOT…

-It’s not a command, it’s a fact…

* Whether you’re aware of it or not, you do not wrestle with flesh and blood.
* We are in a spiritual war
* If you don’t know that, you’ll just fight with the people around you all day… Not making any progress.
  + **EXAMPLE:** MARRIAGES…

I’VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE WIN A WAR THEY DIDN’T RECOGNIZE THEY WERE IN…

* YOU DON’T PASSIVELY WIN WARS…

-If you’re not fighting spiritually… Then you’re losing...

-Because the enemy comes after all of us.

-His goal is to weave his way into your life in a way…

-He’ll take anyway he can, he’s not picky.

Look at how Jesus dealt with a spirit in Luke 13…

**Luke 13:11-13** “And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. **12**But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.” **13**And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”

* We would just say she has a bad back…
* Jesus identified there was a spirit of infirmity behind it that had been with her 18 years!
  + Therefore, he didn’t speak to her back to be “healed”
  + He spoke to the woman to be “loosed”
* I THINK I WOULD HAVE PRAYED THE WRONG THING…
  + I would have declared her back healed and then wondered why it wasn’t

[ASK… IF THIS LADY ASKED YOU FOR PRAYER AFTER A CHURCH SERVICE, HOW MANY OF YOU WOULD PROBABLY FOR HER BACK TO BE HEALED?]

* This is why believers are stuck in many ways…
  + Because we don’t know **WHAT WE’RE UP AGAINST**, we don’t know **HOW TO** **COMBAT IT**.
  + Because we don’t know **HOW TO COMBAT IT**, we don’t **SEE THE RESULTS**…
  + Because we don’t **SEE THE RESULTS**, so our **FAITH IS SHAKEN…**
  + When our **FAITH IS SHAKEN,** we **LOSE ALL POWER TO SEE GOD DO THE MIRACUOUS.**

We need to be able to address the problem head on, not just some vague prayer…

* “Lord I pray that **everything evil** stays away from **everyone, everywhere, forever**…”
  + It’s a sweet prayer, but no demon has to loose it’s grip from that.
  + We see Jesus addressing each problem DIRECTLY and often BY NAME…
    - One of the first components to winning a battle is identifying what we’re dealing with.
  + In order to identify what we’re dealing with… We need to be so sensitive to the Holy Spirit…
    - **STORY:** Pastor wouldn’t pray because of UNFORGIVENESS

TO BE CLEAR… NOT EVERYTHING IS THE ENEMY.

* Flesh
* Physical disease
* sickness
* Mental conditions
* ETC.

SO I want to be clear on that… The Good news is that the Lord can heal BOTH SPIRITUAL AND NATURAL ISSUES.

-And we see it in the bible…

HOWEVER, What scripture shows us is that

* WAY MORE THINGS ARE SPIRITUAL THAN WE REALIZE…
  + How do we hear the Holy Spirit’s voice clearly enough to know what we’re dealing with?
    - To start, live your live in a way that doesn’t grieve Him…
      * Don’t talk as if He’s not listening…
      * Don’t do life as if He doesn’t see…
      * Don’t listen to music as if he doesn’t hear…

EXAMPLE: If you were giving Pastor Carl a ride somewhere, **would you put on your usual music choices?** Or would you change it to a playlist of the most wonderous hymns?

-If you would change for Pastor Carl because your typical music is junk, then you honor him more than the Lord…

* Don’t change it for Pastor Carl, the LORD is with you everywhere you go!
* **Valuing Holy Spirit’s voice with your life’s decisions is the first key to hearing Him more clearly.**
* **The Holy Spirit will help us identify if the enemy has gained a foothold**
  + And we all know the devil is crafty… BUT DO WE KNOW WHY?

“THE DEVIL IS CRAFTY BECAUSE HE ISN’T POWERFUL”

**-STORY:** Guy: “Can I have change for $100?” Employee: “Let me see the $100…”

Guy: “ahh” and walked away upset…

-Why’d this guy try to deceive? He has to if he wants any of that money.

* The restaurant owner wouldn’t need to deceive… BECAUSE HE HAS THE POWER…

“IN THE ABSENCE OF POWER, YOU RELY ON LIES…”

SATAN IS THE FATHER OF LIES…

WHICH ALSO MAKES HIM THE FATHER OF POWERLESSNESS

-Don’t be scared of the devil… Be aware of him.

-If the devil could throw you off a cliff, he would have done it already.

Look at how Jesus dealt with unclean spirits in Mark 5…

**Mark 5:5-13** **“**And always, night and day, he [THE DEMON POSSESSED MAN] was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. **6**When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. **7**And he cried out with a loud voice and said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.” **8**For He said to him, “Come out of the man, unclean spirit!” **9**Then He asked him, “What *is* your name?” And he answered, saying, “My name *is* Legion; for we are many.” **10**Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. **11**Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. **12**So all the demons begged Him, saying, “Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.” **13**And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.”

There’s a lot we can learn from this passage…

I want you to catch this: The demons needed permission to go into the pigs…

* 1. Write this down: “THE DEVIL CAN GO NOWHERE WITHOUT FIRST BEING GIVEN PERMISSION BY SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY”
     1. Here’s good news (and in some cases bad news)…

-We, as human beings have been given authority since the beginning…

**Genesis 1:26** “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Jesus also said in **Luke 10:19** “Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

* This is part of why we don’t see demon possessed animals drowning themselves all the time by the way…
  + Animals have no authority to let demons in and out…
  + We have been given authority…

-And we can use that authority to cast out demons, or give place to them…

* Spiritual warfare is real… I experienced it in ways in the beginning of this year like NEVER BEFORE…

**MY STORY:**

* Starting in January, I went through something that I never had before…
* **The 10 days…**
  + COUGHING
  + NUMBNESS
  + SLEEPLESSNESS
  + ANXIETY
  + DEPRESSION
  + CLOUDINESS
* **After 10 days…**
  + OVERALL BETTER
  + FEARFUL THOUGH…
  + ANXIOUS AT TIMES
  + SO CLOUDY
  + NO CONFIDENCE
    - COULDN’T HEAR GOD
  + HOPELESSNESS
  + I would ask myself a lot… **AM I OKAY?**
    - * I didn’t have more than one day in a row where I felt solid…
* **During sabbatical…**
  + IT WASN’T JUST MENTAL TIREDNESS
  + CUT OFF COMPETING NOISE
  + STARTING WORSHIPPING
  + OBEYED
    - CONFERENCE SEVERAL OTHER WAYS
* **Deliverance…**
  + - **STORY:** I watched a message. I was DELIVERED…
      * Spirit of fear and insanity LEFT…
* **Mark 9:20** Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.
  + The Lord showed up, the devil started convulsing…
  + When the devil becomes obvious, it’s not his best card, it’s his last card…

WAS SAYING: “LOTS OF PEOPLE BEING ATTACKED”

NOW SAYING: “WAVE OF DELIVERENCE”

* **Mark 9:25-27** “When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” **26**Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” **27**But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.
  + He convulsed GREATLY and people THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD…
  + BUT then… Jesus picked him up and HE AROSE FREE from something that had TORMENTED HIM SINCE CHILDHOOD…
  + There is a wave of deliverance coming for believers to set them free…
    - SO WE CAN BE USED BY GOD TO COMPLETE THE GREAT COMMISSION…
    - For some, you don’t even know what you need deliverance from…
    - For some, you want to be delivered, but when the enemy starts convulsing or shaking up your life, you immediately give up and fold to hopefully numb it.
    - For some, you want to be delivered, but still value the things of this world too much.
    - For some, you will persevere, do what’s needed and you WILL SEE the Lord:
      * TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
      * LIFT YOU UP TO FREEDOM

Let me close 3 WAYS TO START CLEARING HOUSE OF THE ENEMY… [SKIP scriptures if needed for time]

**1. Flood the Word…**

* **Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
  + The Word will help you discern what’s really going on
* **Psalm 119:130** “The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”

-The first thing God spoke in the bible is “LET THERE BE LIGHT…”

-He loves to bring light and He does it most often through His Word…

-If you haven’t been giving it much thought, it will bring you understanding.

* **Psalm 119:105** “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”
* His word will show you where you are… AND how to get out from where you are…

**2. Become a Worshipper**

**Acts 16:23-26** “And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. **24**Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. **25**But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. **26**Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

-Being beaten, in prison and chained, they sang praise to the Lord… God responded to their praise with deliverance.

**3. Walk in true Obedience**

* If God tells you to cut some things out, cut them out…
* If God tells you to step out in a certain way, step out.
* The word tells us to cry out to Him, so do it.

**1 Chronicles 5:20-22**“And they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all who *were* with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him. **21**Then they took away their livestock—fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred and fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand of their donkeys—also one hundred thousand of their men; **22**for many fell dead, because the war *was* God’s. And they dwelt in their place until the captivity.”

-They cried out to God in the battle…

-Their battle became His battle

PRAY

EXTRA FOR SUNDAY?...

Let’s look at a scenario where Jesus and His disciples encountered a demon-possessed boy…

**Matthew 17:14-21** “And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, **15**“Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. **16**So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.” **17**Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” **18**And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. **19**Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” **20**So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. **21** However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

-Jesus is teaching us how to go about spiritual warfare…

Notice some things:

* it brings me hope that the Jesus’ 12 disciples tried to accomplish something and couldn’t do it…
  + Because I’ve been there! Anyone else?

**STORY:**

* We tend to focus on what the disciples did wrong here, BECAUSE THEY DID MISS IT…
  + I want to also point out WHAT THEY DID RIGHT…
  + Their response to this failure was to pull Jesus aside privately and ask him… “What happened there?”
  + How much could we learn by going aside with the Lord as a response to things we don’t understand?
    - That we’d pray and say “Lord, what happened there?”
    - That we’d open the Word and say “Lord, teach me… Guide me…”
  + Instead we can be so wise in our own eyes and start to prescribe what the problem was…
  + **EXAMPLE:** How many people today would say “God just wants this to keep him possessed way at this time… Probably to teach us something… HE HAS A PLAN”
    - It’s people (often with good hearts) trying to protect themselves and the people around them in the face of disappointment by putting it on God.
  + **Look at the response of Jesus though:**

“Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.”

* + - AKA, He’s saying the problem is not with Me…
    - It doesn’t mean that we personally are always the problem if we don’t see breakthrough… However, it does mean that there are often factors that we don’t understand…
      * AND WE CAN’T UNDERSTAND UNLESS THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALS IT.
      * In this case, Jesus also said “However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” Which is an additional point that they didn’t know…
  + It’s very tempting… But unless the Spirit of God reveals it to you, be careful not to prescribe whatever you think issue is… BECAUSE UNLESS THE WORD OR THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CLEAR TO US ABOUT THAT SITUATION, WE JUST DON’T KNOW.